



POLICE COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BETHEL POLICE COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, MAR 21, 2012
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT-CONFERENCE ROOM

ATTENDING: CHAIRMAN NICHOLAS ELLIS
COMMISSIONER CHRIS MCCOLLAM
COMMISSIONER HUGO GRECO
COMMISSIONER DAN GROSSO
COMMISSIONER MIKE DUFF
CHIEF JEFFREY FINCH

Chairman Nick Ellis opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

1. General Public Comments

Mr Lee Day of 8 Doug Hill Rd Newtown introduced himself as a physical therapist, offering his services to the community and the Department.

2. Review of Past Minutes for 2/15/12 and 2/29/12

Comm McCollam noted that in Old Business sec 4a of the 2/15/12 minutes should refer to him a "Commissioner" rather than "Chairman".

Motion by Comm Greco to accept the revised minutes of the regular meeting of 2/15/12; seconded by Comm Duff – vote passed with Comm Grosso abstaining due to his absence at this meeting.

Motion by Comm McCollam to accept the minutes of the special meeting of 2/29/12; seconded by Comm Greco - unanimous

3. Budget Report

Chief Finch stated that the overtime budget is \$8K above last year-to-date due to communication staffing. Also included in the report are categories on how overtime is divided. Motion by Comm Greco to accept budget report as presented was rescinded as the Commission decided instead to go into executive session.

Motion by Chairman Ellis to go into executive session and invite Chief Finch and First Selectman Knickerbocker to attend; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

At 6:35 the Commission came out of executive session.

Motion by Comm McCollam to approve the budget report as presented; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

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TOWN OF BETHEL
TOWN CLERK

4. Old Business

a) Monthly Reports

Chief Finch noted that the report is now tracking cell phone violations. Comm McCollam complimented MACO officer Shanley for his monthly reports, especially the absence of "GOA's" (gone on arrivals), overused on the reports of his predecessor. Motion by Comm Greco to accept the monthly reports as presented; seconded by Chairman Ellis – unanimous.

b) Bethel Cycle Sport Club

As directed by the Commission at the last meeting 2/15/12 sec 5c, Lt Dickinson, in concert with Norman Semchyshen of the Bethel Cycle Sport Club, studied the Club's request for bicycle "share the road" traffic signs. The Lieutenant stated that traffic signs are not designed to target attitudes that cause unsafe behavior between people driving cars and people riding bikes. The main problem is that many drivers who think that roads are just for cars, feel pedestrians and cyclists either do not belong there or have lesser rights if they do. In this case they are not anticipated, and drivers adjust for their presence responding to the inconvenience by treating them aggressively and unsafely. Legally people have equal rights to use local roads and whether they choose to walk, bike, or drive. The Lieutenant suggested that instead of just more traffic signs, a town themed public safety message be posted at appropriate locations to change drivers, cyclists, and pedestrian perceptions about other road users that will in turn positively change their behavior. The cycle club is willing to pay for the signs themselves. Lt Dickinson stated that a public safety message with the theme "Live and Let Live - Share the Road" with equally sized cyclist, pedestrian, and driver symbols should help change behavior. The message is one of tolerance toward others to legitimize and equalize other road users. It is a reminder that there may be pedestrians or cyclists in the road ahead and the actions of drivers have life and death consequences. Comm Grosso's observation that the cyclists themselves abuse their rights by riding two and three abreast was addressed at the last meeting. Chief Finch stated that cyclists must ride to the right and not use the condition of the road sides (bumps, potholes and sand) as a reason to ride in the road "because it is more convenient" in a manner which blocks traffic. Mr Semchyshen stated that he can only address these issues with his club's members and cannot be responsible for the actions of all cyclists on the road. Comm Duff noted the problem as being one of 21st century technology clashing with 19th century technology. The Lieutenant stated that roads chosen for this message would be local roads that are part of the state bike tour map, some school route roads, and roads where an advisement of mixed use would increase awareness and safety. Chief Finch stated that if sign design samples can be approved, this request can be acted upon before the next meeting. Motion by Chairman Ellis to table this item for the next meeting but it will be acted upon at the special meeting before the regular meeting; seconded by Comm Greco - unanimous.

c) Budget 2012 – 2013 Update

Chief Finch reported that the Board of Finance cut \$25K out of the budget, designating the cuts be made in salary accounts. The Chief questioned the reason for the designated account with the First Selectman, the reason being the Finance Board did not want any other accounts such as equipment to be cut. Comm Duff stated that the Board of Finance can dictate the dollar amount but cannot dictate where cuts are to be made. The Chief pointed out municipal budgeting is different from budgeting in private firms. One interpretation of targeting a particular account is the delivery of a message whether the authority to specify exists or not. The specified loss to the budget can probably be made up over the course of the time remaining in the fiscal year. Comm McCollam pointed out that there is no “fat” in this budget.

5. New Business

a) Revised General Orders

2007-14 Public (Press) Information Officer (P.I.O.)

The change involved selecting a single individual (the Captain) as P.I.O. who can delegate responsibilities to the two lieutenants to cover two of the three shifts. Their responsibility would be to check press releases by duty sergeants and officers to make sure they are done properly. The intent is to make sure higher ranks of the Department not only take the responsibility for overseeing that press releases are being made out properly, so that only releasable information is included, but also to act as the press contact person. Motion by Comm McCollam that General Order 2007-14 Public Information Officer be accepted with revision of 5/21/12; seconded by Comm Greco – unanimous.

2007-04 Emergency Services Unit

This was basically a title change, Field Operations Commander to Executive Officer. Motion by Comm Greco that General Order 2007-04 Emergency Services Unit be accepted with revision of 5/22/12; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

b) Police Officer Recruitment Test

The Department is in the process of searching for police officer applicants and constructing a test. Comm McCollam asked that the Department immediately advertise for applicants with stated times and dates instead of waiting for the test to be prepared. The Commissioner asked that institutions of higher learning in the state with criminal justice curriculums also be included.

c) Retirement – Capt Cedergren

Capt Cedergren has announced his retirement from the Department, effective 4/29/12. He will be moving on a different career path.

The awards ceremony will be held 4/13/12 at Capallaro’s grove starting at 7:00 pm.

Motion by Comm McCollam to add report from Capt Cedergren concerning PT Barnum road closure to New Business as item d; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

d) Road Closure PT Barnum Sq

In his letter Capt Cedergren agrees to the closing of PT Barnum Sq for a block party 12:00 noon to 3 p.m. on Sunday 7/22/12. Comm Duff questioned any conflict with the Main St closing for church services. Motion by Comm McCollam to accept Capt Cedergren's letter; seconded by Comm Grosso – unanimous.

6. Correspondence

a) COGENT – fingerprints

Formally covered by a state grant, the \$3,700 bill for COGENT finger print machine maintenance will now have to be paid by the Department. It was still a question whether the bill would be received within this budget or next year's budget. For the 2013 budget a new machine will have to be purchased for \$7,200.

b) Chief States Attorney

A recent law required electronic video and voice recording confessions relating to specified crimes with the Chief States Attorney setting uniform standards. Some grant money has been withheld to pay for the equipment which will be standard for all Departments. Just as with COGENT, maintenance will eventually have to be absorbed locally.

7. Chief's Report

• Training Report – Monthly

The monthly training report from Lt Kennedy was in the hands of the Commissioners.

• Job Description Updates:

• Patrol Corporal - Language change from Field Operation Commander (Captain) to Executive Officer. Also the involvement of lieutenants in the supervision of patrol officers and corporals.

• Animal Control - Language change from Field Operation Commander (Captain) to Executive Officer.

• Youth Officer – Considerable changes arising from the non-participation in the DARE program; follow up on all juvenile arrests in contacting family for assistance they may require; computer and cell phone literacy; establishment of a communication network within and without the Department.

6. Commissioner Comments

Chairman Ellis asked Comm Duff if the Taylor Ave rock issue has been resolved. (See minutes 2/15/12 New Business). It has not.

Comm McCollam expressed disappointment with the last batch of police officer candidates and confidence the Department will move forward with the new batch and the search for a new Captain.

Chairman Ellis sees losing Capt Cedergren as a "huge loss" and wishes Bob and his family the best of luck.

At 7:50 motion by Chairman Ellis to go back into executive session and invite Chief Finch to attend; seconded by Comm Duff – unanimous.

At 8:40 the Commission came out of executive session.

At 8:40 motion by Comm Greco to adjourn; seconded by Comm McCollam – unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Miller Jr", written in a cursive style.

Ferdinand Miller Jr

Secretary